

12. Implementation

Introduction

The St. Croix County Comprehensive Plan serves as a guide for future planning and development. To achieve the County's vision, goals and objectives, it is important to develop a deliberate process to implement the policies and actions described in the plan. While some of the recommendations found in the plan will be automatically implemented, others require changes to existing regulations or new proposed regulations. Specific follow-up actions will be required for many policies to become reality. The Implementation section provides a roadmap and timetable for the implementation steps that require additional actions. It reflects priorities and encourages implementation in an efficient and coordinated manner.

Plan Adoption

The first step in implementing the plan is making sure it is adopted in a manner which supports its future use for more detailed decision making. The second step is to provide copies of the adopted plan to the cities, villages and towns in and adjacent to St. Croix County and to local libraries and the Wisconsin Department of Administration.

Consistency of Plan Elements

The state comprehensive planning statute requires that the implementation element describe how each of the elements is integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the plan. Because the various elements of the comprehensive plan were prepared simultaneously there are no known internal inconsistencies between the different sections on the elements of this plan. Also all elements of the plan were given a final review once the plan was completed to evaluate consistency between elements.

Implementation Recommendations

Time Frame

This Plan has been written as a guide for development for the next 20 years. Planning progress will likely occur in increments or phases. As shown in the following section, a suggested timeframe has been assigned for each provision or action. The four different timeframes include:

Ongoing: Continual planning and monitoring

Immediate: Years 1 -2

Short Range: Years 3 - 5

Long Range: Years 5 - 20

Ongoing Planning

Comprehensive planning is a continuous process. There are additional planning activities which are identified as a result of the planning process, such as the need for more or better information, studies or analysis. Ongoing planning includes plan monitoring and evaluation to ensure plans stay current with changing conditions. Regular plan evaluation will lead to plan updates whenever necessary.

A comprehensive plan that is reviewed and updated periodically will not become outdated and is much easier to implement. To keep it current as circumstances change, ongoing planning is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan and review proposed changes to ensure that it is an up-to-date expression of the county's vision.

The following table addresses future planning activities and the need for more information and analysis on proposed policies or programs.

PROVISIONS OR ACTIONS	TIMELINE
As part of the St. Croix County River Crossing mitigation, the county will update and identify protection strategies for environmental corridors and environmentally sensitive areas.	Short Range
Conduct a feasibility study, including funding options and criteria for protecting targeted lands	Short Range
Purchase and/or Transfer of Development Rights programs should be researched, evaluated and developed in conjunction with towns interested in farmland preservation.	Short-Range
Develop the county's on and off-road bikeway system with varied facilities according to traffic volumes, road conditions and available trail routes.	Short-Range
Participate in planning and locating future municipal wastewater treatment systems and their implications for county wide development.	Ongoing
Evaluate the plan and its administration and implementation and report findings	Ongoing
Determine need for plan update based on plan evaluation	Ongoing / Long Range

Ordinances & Regulations

County codes and ordinances are an important means of implementing the policies of a comprehensive plan. The zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations comprise the principal regulatory devices used to protect existing development and guide future growth as prescribed by the comprehensive plan. The County Board is responsible for amending and adopting these local ordinances in conjunction with local Towns. The following section provides a brief overview of existing implementation tools available to the County.

Zoning Ordinance

Zoning is a primary regulatory tool for implementing land use and development management policies. It can be used to protect existing development and community character and guide future growth as prescribed in this plan by controlling the use of land and the design and placement of structures. The County will update its zoning ordinance to reflect the plan objectives and policies under Section 59.65(5)(d), Wisconsin State Statutes. It is important for the county to revise its zoning ordinance so that it is consistent with the comprehensive plan and state statute.

Since eighteen of the twenty one towns have adopted County zoning, the towns and the county will need to use this plan and the local town plans as guidance to ensure that the county zoning ordinances and plan are consistent. Therefore, successful implementation of the ordinance requires partnership, communication and coordination. The County needs to work with the towns to resolve conflicts over zoning enforcement and zoning changes. Joint meetings should be held to negotiate solutions. In addition, cities, villages, and towns should continue to collaborate on zoning concerns and land use policies by having a joint planning commission to resolve land use disputes. With good relationship among government jurisdictions, the County can coordinate "multi-jurisdictional" issues such as transportation, open space, sanitary sewer service, storm water management, and environmental corridors.

The County does not support rezoning or development of all the lands identified for development on the Future Land Use Map immediately following adoption of this Plan, nor do the Towns. Other factors will have to be considered, such as the quality of the proposed development, its potential

effect on adjacent properties, the ability to provide services to the site, and the phasing of development.

Neither the Future Land Use Map, nor the policies within this Chapter, requires a landowner to change the current use of his or her land. While it can make sense to match portions of the Future Land Use Map with the County Zoning Map immediately after plan adoption, other portions of the zoning map can achieve consistency with the land use plan incrementally over time.

Land Division

The land division ordinance which regulates subdivision platting and design requirements, controls all land divisions, as well as directs new developments, is one of the essential tools for plan implementation. The county is authorized under Section 236.45 and 236.46, Wisconsin State Statutes to adopt land division control ordinances.

After adoption of this plan, towns will use the County's subdivision ordinance as a guide to make sure that there are no conflicts. If the towns want more restrictive standards than found in the County's ordinance, they may adopt their own subdivision ordinances. The areas where cities, villages and towns meet are often regulated by multi-jurisdictional subdivision authority. These authorities should work together to eliminate conflicts in their review processes and standards. Local municipalities may also find opportunities to develop and implement boundary and annexation agreements to resolve existing and potential land use conflicts.

PROVISIONS OR ACTIONS	TIMELINE
The county will establish and make available multiple agricultural zoning districts in conformance with Ch. 91, Farmland Preservation, resulting in a comprehensive revision of the St. Croix County Zoning ordinance.	Immediate
Update and revise zoning ordinances to meet the diverse needs of residents and landowners potentially resulting in a comprehensive revision of the zoning ordinance.	Immediate
Update and revise the county shoreland zoning ordinance to meet NR 115 Wisconsin Administrative Code Revisions.	Immediate
Develop specific plans and policies to address protection of the St. Croix River watershed and expected development from the new St. Croix River Crossing.	Short-Range
The county will establish and make available zoning standards to prohibit major subdivisions in farmland preservation areas.	Short-Range
Amend subdivision ordinance with a site plan review process and standards that enhance the visual and functional quality of development.	Short Range
Enact a storm water management and erosion control ordinance.	Short Range
Update County mobile home park regulations to require and encourage new and existing mobile home parks to address storm shelters and emergency plans.	Short Range
Work closely with the towns, cities, and villages to encourage them to develop ordinances that are compatible with the County plan.	Ongoing
Update and keep county ordinances current with revisions in state law, to address changing needs of residents and respond to concerns of local government.	Ongoing

Intergovernmental Cooperation

St Croix County is undoubtedly the principal player in implementing the comprehensive plan. However, federal and state agencies, neighboring counties, municipal jurisdictions, and/or agencies are important components to plan implementation and meeting future needs.

Cooperative relationships with local units of government and neighboring jurisdictions and agencies will not only foster coordinated development and enhance the overall quality of life, but also help achieve some of the plan goals, objectives and policies in a cost-effective way. The following table identifies possible intergovernmental activities the county can participate in and certain actions the county can take to improve implementation.

PROVISIONS OR ACTIONS	TIMELINE
Encourage and participate in sewer service area planning.	Ongoing
Protect and manage identified unique open space areas, through the cooperation of state and federal agencies, local governments, conservation groups, and landowners.	Ongoing
Work with state agencies to enforce regulations that protect the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.	Ongoing
Cooperate with the Lower St. Croix River Management Commission and others in comprehensive riverway planning and management efforts.	Ongoing
Encourage the restoration of prairie or grassland ecosystems through cooperative efforts of the state, county and federal agencies, and landowners.	Ongoing
Update and enhance shoreland ordinances based on the most up-to-date State revisions to provide greater shoreland habitat protection on sensitive shorelines and lakes.	Ongoing
Promote the use of shoreland habitat restoration as a best management practice. Work with state agencies, Lake Districts and Lake Associations to support the enforcement of regulations that protect and restore shoreland habitat.	Ongoing
Work with the local governments and the state to determine, and plan for, necessary local improvements to the transportation system in St. Croix County.	Ongoing
Encourage the state to consider local planning findings, goals, objectives and policies when planning major transportation facilities.	Ongoing
Work with local communities and state and federal agencies to implement the St. Croix County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.	Ongoing
Work with local municipalities to improve St. Croix County Zoning ordinances regarding property maintenance and nuisance issues.	Ongoing

Plan Monitoring, Amendments and Update

The County should regularly evaluate its progress towards achieving the recommendations of this plan and amend and update the plan as appropriate. This section suggests recommended criteria and procedures for monitoring, amending and updating the plan. As part of the monitoring process the plan will be continually checked for internal consistency and consistency with other land use regulations and decisions.

Procedures

The county should continuously evaluate its decisions on private development proposals, public investments, regulations, incentives and other actions against the recommendations of this plan.

Amendments may be appropriate in the years following initial plan adoption, particularly in instances where the plan is becoming irrelevant or contradictory to emerging policies or trends. Amendments are generally defined as minor changes to the plan maps or text. The plan will be specifically evaluated for potential amendments at least every five years and at most in 10 years. Frequent amendments to accommodate specific development proposals should be avoided or else the plan will become meaningless.

The state comprehensive planning law requires that the county use the same basic process to amend the plan as it used to initially adopt the plan. This does not mean that new surveys need to be conducted. It does mean that the procedures defined under § 66.1001(4) Wis. Stats. need to be followed.